Report on malnutrition of children

126. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to a report released globally by the Washington based International Good Policy Institute, India ranks 3rd from the bottom of the world on malnourished kids;

(b) if so, the other main points mentioned in the report; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The International Food Policy Research Institute, Washington has published the Global Hunger Index (GHI), capturing 3 dimensions of hunger; insufficient availability of food, shortfalls in the nutritional status of children and child mortality. In the Index, information available from the reports of FAO 2005, WHO 2006 and UNICEF 2005 has been used. India ranks 96th in the said GHI out of 119 developing countries.

(b) The main points mentioned in the said report are:

(i) Sub Saharan Africa and South Asia are hot spots of hunger and undernutrition. However, positive trends can also be observed throughout most of South and Southeast Asia, particularly in India and China.

(ii) India's current score of 25.73 is an improvement on its performance of 41.23 since the first index was published in 1981.

(iii) China and India, the population giants in East Asia and South Asia, made large contributions to the overall very positive trends in these two regions:

- Cereal yields more than doubled in India between 1961— 1997
- The proportion of undernourished was reduced in the country
- Access to safe water increased notably by the 1990s (from 54 per cent to 81 per cent)

- Per capita Gross National Income more than doubled in India from 1980 to 2003
- Underweight in children was reduced by more than 20 percentage points in India
- Under-5 Mortality rate was halved in India from 1981 to 2003.

(c) The Government is already seized of the problem and is implementing a number of schemes to improve the nutritional status of children. Some of these are as under:

(i) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (Minstry of Women and Child Development);

(ii) National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid Day Meal Scheme) (Department of School Education and Literacy);

(iii) Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls in 51 districts to provide free foodgrains to undernourished adolescent girls and pregnant and nursing mothers (Ministry of Women and Child Development);

(iv) Nutrition Education and Training Programmes of Food and Nutrition Board (Ministry of Women and Child Development);

(v) National Rural Health Mission including delivery of Iron and Folic Acid and Vitamin A Supplementation programmes and Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illnesses (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare);

(vi) National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare);

(vii) Targetted Public Distribution System (Department of Food and Public Distribution).

(viii) Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme/Swajaldhara and Total Sanitation Campaign; National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (Ministry of Rural Development).